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WINTERING AT MENTONE.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN autumn has drawn to a close, and unmistakable symptoms of winter are making their appearance, the swallows are seen to wing their way from England, and betake themselves to the sunny regions on the shores of the Mediterranean; thence returning to their northern haunts when nature is reviving under the genial influence of spring. The instructive example set by these sagacious birds is not unworthy of being followed when circumstances call for and permit an escape from the cold, the fogs, the rain, and sleety drizzle of a protracted winter.

Without undervaluing the comforts of an English fireside, when frost dims the window-pane with its beautiful efflorescence, I am on the whole disposed to think that health is best secured by a reasonable amount of outdoor exercise in the sunshine; but that enjoyment is unfortunately denied on anything like a salutary scale to those who are enfeebled either by pulmonary affections or by advancing years, in any part of Great Britain. Damp cold weather is, in short, a powerful enemy, notwithstanding all fireside comforts; and how many both of old and young are swept away every winter by it, need not here be recapitulated. When any man on the shady side of middle life has the fortitude to look around to note the number of his old and valued friends, he is shocked to find how meagre is the list. One after another has disappeared, from no other perceptible cause than that their physical powers, originally vigorous, had succumbed in the feverish, and we might almost say, insane, battle of life. Too long and too diligently have they stuck to their professional pursuits, or been fascinated by the allurements of society, taking relaxation only by fits and starts, and seemingly under the impression that they have still a long career before them. Having realised a fair competence, they might very well ask themselves why they should continue to toil, to speculate, and to rack their brains, when a life of com-

parative ease and reflection would in all respects be more becoming. This is exactly the question, however, which they never put. The upshot is well known. Through sundry real or imaginary entanglements, their day of safety is past. A cold, foggy, drizzly November finishes them; and at about two o'clock on a wintry afternoon, they are, in all the pomp of hearse and carriages, decorously conducted to the burying-ground. That is why people have so few old acquaintances about them. They had forgot that Death is always busy laying about him with his scythe, and that the art of long living consists pretty much in knowing how to keep out of his way.

A celebrated French writer on hygiene has a theory that dying at anything under a hundred years of age is all a mistake—that it is people's own blame, or the blame of their progenitors, if they die earlier. Far be it from me to dispute the accuracy of this most interesting theory. I would allow a handsome discount of ten per cent., and take ninety as a fair age. The method of living till ninety, however, is either not understood or very slightly acted on. Lord Brougham was acquainted with it. He saw there was a knack in giving fair play to the system by means of an annual restorative. Every year he went off at the right time to Cannes; cheating alike the winter and the gravedigger as long as flesh and blood could do so. Other individuals, making the necessary sacrifices, now adopt a similar policy. They leave and return to England with the swallows; by which not unpleasant contrivance they spin out their lives; if not to ninety, still to something considerably beyond what, to all appearance, was to be their allotted span.

Circumstances, which it is unnecessary to particularise, led me to make an experiment of this kind, by proceeding at the close of 1868 to Mentone, in the Western Riviera, such being the designation usually given to that portion of the shore of the Mediterranean stretching from Genoa to the Gulf of Lyons. The visit on that occasion being successful, was repeated on a more leisurely scale towards the close of 1869; and I now propose

to offer some account of these winterings in the south, in the hope it may prove generally useful.

In contemplating a residence abroad for four or five months, it is, as a matter of course, all important to go to an appropriate place. Medically speaking, one of the best advisers on the subject is the singularly comprehensive and entertaining work of Dr J. Henry Bennet, entitled a *Winter and Spring on the Shores of the Mediterranean*.^{*} In his own person, this ingenious author exemplifies the benefit of stopping in time, and taking a long annual relaxation in a genial climate. He tells us that five-and-twenty years devoted to a laborious profession, and the harassing cares which pursue a hard-worked London physician, broke down his vital powers. In 1859, he became consumptive, and strove in vain to arrest the progress of disease. The choice was either retirement, with the faint hope of restoration to health, or within twelve months Kensal Green Cemetery. He chose wisely to relinquish a large and lucrative practice, and to take the chance of benefiting by a residence in a climate suited to his special condition. His book may be described as an exhaustive research in quest of such southern climates as may be best adapted to the assuagement of certain bodily complaints, including general debility. He describes his visits to various parts of France, Italy, and Spain, bordering on the Mediterranean, to Corsica, Sicily, and also to Algeria; his narrative being everywhere interspersed with such a variety of anecdote and adventure, as well as of remarks on the vegetation, natural history, and geography of the countries visited, as gives it an interest to the general reader.

Summing up, he says, the health regions may be divided into three sections. First, the mild and dry, in which is comprehended the Western Riviera, and the east and south-east coasts of Spain; second, the mild and moist, to which belong Corsica, Sicily, and Algeria; and third, the west coast of Italy, which appears to occupy, meteorologically as well as geologically, an intermediate position. It may be safely concluded that no person from Great Britain who seeks merely for an agreeable winter resort, would from choice go to a place reputedly moist. We have plenty of moisture at home, and do not need to search for it abroad. What we want is, a mild dry atmosphere, with as much sunshine and scope for outdoor exercise, without recourse to great-coats, as can possibly be procured within a reasonable distance, and which abounds in the attributes of civilisation. As may be learned from Dr Bennet, latitude is not all in all. This original inquirer says very candidly that 'five degrees of south latitude do not make up in climate-questions for want of protection from north winds.' It might be added that, besides protection from cold winds, we also need good house accommodation; for without that, the best climate in the world can be of no

use to visitors. There is another important consideration, and that is, the discomfort of a sea-voyage on a sea so treacherous in its moods as the Mediterranean; for which reason, to say nothing of other disagreeables, we may leave Algeria out of court. The doctor has evidently a high notion of Corsica as a health-resort; but there again is the drawback of a sea-voyage. Coming to the mainland, he speaks approvingly of San Remo, which lies about twenty miles to the eastward of Mentone. There, I can say something from experience. On visiting it in January 1869, I found it a dirty old-fashioned Italian town, which had not even got the length of gas-lighting. Besides, it had no public promenade along the beach, and that I hold to be indispensable in any health-resort of the English. Nice has a long and handsome promenade of this description—charming, I would call it, but for the fact that it is offensively odorous, in consequence of imperfect police regulations. Cannes has likewise high claims on account of its amenities—so high that it is entitled to be spoken of as by far the most aristocratic and expensive of the continental winter resorts.

From the configuration of the coast, Hyères, Cannes, and Nice lie farther south than Mentone, but that advantage is more than counterbalanced by the superior shelter from cold winds enjoyed by Mentone; for, as has just been observed, a full exposure to the south, along with shelter on the north, is worth several degrees of latitude. After all, Mentone can modestly boast of being situated in latitude 43° 45' N., or upwards of twelve degrees south of Edinburgh. It may be deemed a conclusive proof of Dr Bennet's appreciation of Mentone, when we know that among all the Mediterranean health-resorts he has chosen it for his habitual winter residence; and that, after ten years, he has to outward appearance overcome the malady which drove him abruptly to this species of exile. My own experiences, poor in comparison, point to Mentone as a place, all things considered, where any one needing relaxation, and not encumbered with expectations as to social intercourse, may agreeably pass the more dreary months of winter. How to get at it, may first be adverted to.

There were times, not long ago, when travelling through France was tedious and painful. Those were the days of diligences and passports, and many other things that were very disagreeable. In the present day, such has been the material and social progress of the country, that travellers will find matters not greatly different from what prevails in England. There are railways in all directions, the hotels are frequently on a scale of great splendour, and everywhere visitors are treated with marked civility. Every one knows what Paris has become under the rule of the present emperor—the finest town in the world, an attraction to strangers from all parts of the earth. So lately as twelve years since, the railway from Paris was not pushed beyond Marseille. There it long remained, and to those who wanted to get on farther, there was no help for it but to take the diligence, or hire a carriage specially for the purpose. I can remember hiring a voiture with a pair of horses to go on to Nice, and of being nearly three days on the journey, including

^{*} Fourth Edition. Chapman, London, 1869.

stoppages of two nights, one of those nights being spent at Frejus, in one of the worst and dearest hotels I ever set foot in. Now all this is changed; there is a railway from Marseille by way of Toulon, Cannes, and Nice, to Mentone, which, though only a single line, has been a costly and remarkable undertaking, for it is carried through numerous tunnels and along heavy embankments near the sea-shore. No doubt, we lose the picturesque scenery of the Estrelles by this modern method of transit; but yet we are afforded glimpses of many beautiful valleys and rocky mounts, garnished with fig and orange trees, and see by the cactus and aloes that are growing by the wayside, that we are getting into a southern clime.

In making their way southwards, there are many who drive on through thick and thin, never stopping night or day, as if under a vow to get to their journey's end in the least possible time. My plan is to stop a night, or, it may be, a night and day, here and there, for which there are several good opportunities—as, for example, at Lyon, Avignon, Marseille, or Nice. On each of my recent trips, I have spent a day in Marseille, and also in Nice, for the sake of noting the extraordinary improvements which have taken place within the last few years in both those towns. If we except Paris, no city in France has been so much changed for the better as Marseille. Its new streets and boulevards are a sight worth seeing, and so is its new port of Joliette, constructed at a great cost with much engineering skill. The most surprising novelty, however, is the system of water-supply, effected by bringing the waters of the river Durance a distance of sixty miles by means of tunnels and aqueducts, at an expense of fifty-two millions of francs. One of the aqueducts, that of Roquefavour, measures as much as four hundred metres in length by eighty-two in height—a gigantic work, creditable to French engineering, which may compare favourably with some of the grandest of recent undertakings in England or Scotland.

At Nice, the improvements are likewise suggestive of a desire to keep pace with the times. On formerly visiting the town while it belonged to Italy, there appeared to be a general stagnation. Great endeavours had stopped short, and there was visibly much half-done work. In the hands of the French, a new spirit has been infused into the place. Streets just begun have been completed, and handsome quays with boulevards stretch along both sides of the Paillon, over which several new bridges have been thrown. One of these deserves to be styled something more than a bridge. It is so broad as to afford space for a public garden, in the centre of which is erected a statue of Massena, a native of whom, as of Garibaldi, the Nizzards are justly proud. Professedly, the Paillon is a torrent, but it usually is little else than a bed of dry gravel; the only water visible being a few puddles, in which numbers of women are seen washing clothes in the ordinary continental style. The Paillon will to many travellers be the first specimen of one of those numerous torrents in the Riviera that are flooded only on the occasion of snows melting, or heavy rains falling in the mountains, when, rushing impetuously down, the tumultuous waters bear all before them. Considering what the authorities of Nice have effected as regards building lines of quays, it is matter for surprise that they

seem indifferent to the throwing of all sorts of rubbish over the parapets, and also on the sea-beach, outside the Promenade des Anglais, where heaps of all that is nauseous lie festering in the sun from one year's end to another. As already hinted, but for this unfortunate drawback, the Promenade at Nice would merit the highest encomium. It is broad and commodious, and being fitted up profusely with seats for loungers, it is the fashionable Mall, where all meet and see each other. It is divided by a row of palms and other ornamental plants from the roadway, upwards of a mile in length, on which from morning till night ladies in the fantastic dresses of the period, with a taste for fast living and public exhibition, indulge in driving backwards and forwards with a fury not usual with their sex in our more sober-minded country. To do them justice, they leave the lashing of the ponies to the driver, who sits behind them with a long whip, with which he seems to have much pleasure in inflicting pain on the poor animals. This species of cruelty meets with no reprobation from the onlookers; and from the immunity shewn to the practice, I should infer that in France there is no law repressive of cruelty to animals. I regretted to observe that these fast young ladies were generally English. With its promenades, drives, balls, casino, Jardin Public, musical band, theatre, and abundance of street carriages, Nice is a kind of small Paris, and more a resort for pleasure-seekers than for the recovery of health. Whatever may be its character medically, I should think its social atmosphere anything but wholesome to young persons. To accommodate the numerous fashionable visitors, as also the more steady order of winter sojourners, there are now divers hotels of huge dimensions, and every succeeding year seems to increase the number.

Although Nice is now a French town, the humbler classes remain essentially Italian of the old Savoy type. The dresses of the women are picturesque, and their favourite mode of carrying things is to poise them on the top of the head. The peculiar costumes of the district are well represented in the wooden mosaics which form a remarkable local manufacture. I have never returned home from Nice without purchasing specimens of these beautiful *mosaïques en bois*, at the shop of the brothers Mignon, in the Rue Paradis. On the last occasion, I received an interesting account of how they were prepared. The pictorial effects are, it is said, wholly a result of the varying tints of different kinds of wood grown in the neighbourhood; all being ingeniously shaped and put together without any aid from artificial colouring. As the intrinsic value of the small pieces of wood employed must be insignificant—a pennyworth probably being wrought up in a mosaic which will sell for a couple of napoleons—we have here a striking instance of how national wealth may be increased by exerting artistic ability on materials which are, of themselves, worthless.

Any one can now reach Mentone by railway from Nice in little more than an hour, for which there is an accommodation of six trains a day. The line keeps as near the shore of the Mediterranean as is practicable, by way of Villafranco and Monaco. As it is carried almost as much through dark tunnels as in the open air, one transit is enough. Preferring the old highway across the mountains—the Alpes Maritimes, from which is

derived the name of the department—I hired a carriage for the journey. The route is the commencement of the famous Corniche, which most tourists endeavour to see at least once in their lives. Until 1806, when it was completed as far as Ventimiglia, by order of Bonaparte, there was no other road along this part of the coast of Italy than the very insufficient pathway, fit only for mules, which had originally been made by the Romans on subduing the Ligurians. Snatches of this old Roman road are still in use by the country-people. It was only the pressing emergencies of the Revolutionary army under the conqueror of Italy, at the beginning of the present century, that led to the engineering of the Corniche—a name significant of a pathway winding its way along a natural precipitous cornice. On quitting Nice, the road rises along a mountain-side which commands a magnificent prospect over the valley of the Paillon, dotted with villas and orange-gardens. By and by, on attaining a great height, it gets behind the hills, and we lose sight of the sea. In this respect, the road was devised under the temporary but awkward necessity of avoiding a cannonade from British ships of war. Now that there are no longer any fears on this score, a new Corniche as far as Monaco is partly constructed, and will be a great improvement on the old one; though it will fail to afford such magnificent views as we now have of mountain scenery, and will prevent travellers passing through and seeing the ancient village of Turbia.

On both occasions on which I have passed this way, the weather happened to be of exceptional brilliance. The season was winter, and the height attained was two thousand feet, yet the air was mild and balmy, and in the open carriage, the only shelter required, was an umbrella to avert the dazzling rays of the sun. On the left were the rugged Alpine peaks stretching far away in the distance, while on the right we looked down the precipitous banks, laid out in terraces for vines and orange-gardens, to the picturesquely peninsulated shores of the Mediterranean. Midway, we come in sight of the ancient town of Eza, perched most picturesquely on the summit of a conical mount, and which figures in the early history of this singularly irregular line of coast. A more difficult piece of country for military manoeuvres can scarcely be imagined, for there hardly appears a level spot in the whole territory; hence we have a pretty good idea of why the Ligurians so long defied their enemies, and also why the district in its quality of Principality of Monaco should have for such a length of time maintained an isolated existence. Of the final success of the Roman invaders we have an interesting memorial at Turbia. It consists of the shattered remains of a colossal monument erected in honour of Augustus Cesar, which stood in a conspicuous situation visible from a great distance at sea. After surviving the tumults of the middle ages, this huge historical trophy was blown up by Marshal Villars in 1705. Laterly, the remains have been very properly guarded from casual outrage.

At the decayed village of Turbia, we come in sight of Monaco, perched on a rocky peninsula jutting into the sea, and still walled all around as it was in the days when it required to hold out against foreign enemies. Divided from it on the

east by a small port, rises Monte Carlo, a plateau now unhappily noted for its gambling establishment, the only authorised source of demoralisation of the kind in the south of Europe, and which now by means of the railway draws a daily supply of victims from Nice, for whose accommodation there is a late train nightly, Sundays included. Since the railway was opened, Mentone has become exposed to the same contamination. The only other place on the route calling for a word of observation is Rocca-bruna, a cluster of antique buildings, the capital of a commune, jumbled up in a strange manner with huge brown rocks, that look as if they had been suddenly arrested on tumbling down the lofty hill behind them. From this we have a continued descent to Mentone. As we advance, the scene opens, and turning a corner of the road, we see the place of our destination stretching along the curve of a beautiful bay, backed by low hills, covered with evergreens, while behind these rises a semicircular range of arid mountains, towering several thousand feet high, and forming the screen from the north, that, constituting Mentone an Undercliff, gives it that peculiar mildness and dryness of climate for which it has attained celebrity. A drive for a mile under an avenue of plane-trees, environed with olive-grounds and villas, brings us to the spot where we are to spend the winter months of 1869-70.

W. C.

GWENDOLINE'S HARVEST.

CHAPTER XIX.—THE PRESCRIPTION.

'CAN you guess why my husband left the room so abruptly?' inquired Gwendoline as soon as Dr Gisborne and herself were left alone in the drawing-room.

'Well, I am afraid I can: I believe my anecdotes began to bore him. The fact is, you have spoiled me, my dear Mrs Ferrier, by always listening so patiently to my long stories; it makes me fancy that they must have an interest for other people; I really believe I have driven your husband out of the room with them.'

'No, no; it was not that,' answered Gwendoline with a sigh: 'I will tell you why he left us presently; but in the meantime finish your budget of experiences. You can't imagine what a pleasure it is to listen to you, after the flood of fashionable twaddle that has of late been poured into my ears. You were saying that that scene at Tulle was the second most striking spectacle that you ever beheld; what, then, was the most striking of all?'

'My dear Mrs Ferrier,' returned the doctor smiling, 'since the days of the sultan in the *Arabian Nights*, there has certainly been no such insatiable listener as yourself.' But it was plain the doctor was flattered nevertheless, and pleased enough to pursue his reminiscences at the bidding of one as appreciative as she was beautiful. 'Well, let me see,' mused he; 'yes—the strangest scene to which I was ever witness was the examination of Made-moiselle D'Arcy. That was about ten years ago, in Paris. Her story was a very sad and unpleasant one, and there is no need to speak of it: what was most remarkable in the case was the time during which the proceedings in the court of law were conducted. She had been very ill treated and almost frightened to death by the scoundrel against

whom she was bearing witness, and the effect of the shock had been to make her cataleptic. She was only in a condition to appear and answer questions at stated intervals—namely, from midnight to four in the morning. The court, therefore, in Paris, rose at the close of the usual day's proceedings, and adjourned to the hour in question; but in the meanwhile the whole audience remained fixed in their seats. Then, at twelve o'clock at night, to see that beautiful young woman—just out of her death-trance, as it were—brought in to give her evidence, and to know that in a few hours she would again sink into a state without sense or motion—ah! it was a most pitiful spectacle indeed. But, however, the villain was found guilty, which was some comfort.

'That is the case with most people who commit crimes, is it not? Even if, as you were saying, they occasionally escape punishment, still they are found out by somebody?'

'Yes; the most artful and well-planned scheme of villainy has generally some flaw in it, and often some gross mistake, which you would think would never have been committed by any one in his senses.'

'But may not that be done on purpose, in order that if the worst came to the worst, to get off on the plea of insanity?'

'I hardly think that, though, indeed, any excuse of that sort is always made the most of. For my part, I would have all persons who commit murder—that is, without great provocation, I mean—put to death, whether they are "homicidal maniacs" or not. If they are sane, they deserve it; if they are really mad, they would suffer nothing from the apprehension of death (which is the real torture), and they would be delivered by it from a life of misery. In this world, they can do nothing but harm; and as for their future, it is surely safe to leave them in the hands of Him who made them.'

'I had no idea you were so harsh a man,' said Gwendoline, with a slight shudder. 'You seem to be all for justice, and to have no pity.'

'Your remark, my dear Mrs Ferrier, is more severe upon Providence than upon myself. It is God who is all-merciful, and who will make allowance where our judgment is too hard. As for me, my pity, I confess, is exhausted by the victim, and I have none left for the murderer.—But we were talking of what follies criminals will sometimes commit in the execution of their atrocities. Taylor tells us of a hospital nurse who murdered a patient in the most artful manner, so that the occurrence would certainly have been taken for suicide but for one circumstance. After having committed the crime, she mechanically "laid out" the patient, as she was professionally accustomed to do, smoothed the clothes, straightened the arms with the palms open, and so forth. Not even the tidiest person ever committed suicide in that way; and so, on the evidence she had herself supplied, the poor nurse was hanged. That is, of course, an extreme case of criminal mismanagement; but it is much more difficult to conceal a crime than folks are apt to imagine. Nature herself even sometimes appears as a witness, and points out the offender in a terribly straightforward fashion. A man was once charged with the murder of a woman, who kept house in the City for a firm who only used it during the daytime. The key of the front-door was found upon his person, and it was found that

with that very weapon the deed must have been committed—thus. The ecchymosis—the bruise, that is—upon the victim's face had actually taken the very shape of the wards of the key. It was one of the neatest cases for Law and Medicine to go hand and hand together in, one can possibly imagine. However, I have only read of the thing, and so cannot answer for its truth.'

'Ah! I like to hear you tell of what you have seen with your own eyes, doctor. Now, what is the most singular affair in which you yourself, not as a witness, but as one of the parties concerned, have ever been personally engaged?'

'My dear Mrs Ferrier, you rather puzzle me: I have been concerned in so many queer things. Do you mean by the most singular the most terrible?'

'Well, if you insist on my confessing how fond I am of Horrors, yes.'

'The most trying ordeal I ever underwent,' returned the doctor, 'was, curiously enough, a scientific experiment. It was in the endeavour to observe the moment of what is called somatic death—that is, when the action of the heart ceases—in a man that has been hanged. It was in Albany, in the United States, that this opportunity presented itself. A criminal condemned to death there, was placed by the authorities at the disposal of science to this extent; he was hanged in a passage of the prison, only twelve inches from the ground, and the jail surgeon and myself stood, one on each side of the poor wretch, with our fingers on his pulse. Yes, that was certainly the most sensational adventure in which I was ever engaged. In the fifth minute there were a hundred and twenty-eight pulsations.—There, I think I have told you shocking stories enough. I don't know what your husband would say if he had been listening to them; he does not at all share your taste for the terrible.'

'No,' said Gwendoline, smiling; 'yet we continue to agree pretty well together, notwithstanding that defect in his character.'

'Agree! Why, my dear Mrs Ferrier—for I must not call you Gwendoline now—you are a model couple; that is what everybody says, and, for once, I am prepared to own that everybody is right. You have exceeded even my expectations—an old friend like me may say so—as wife and step-mother; and you know that I used to "pass my life in defending you," before your marriage. And yet, dear me, it seems only the other day that you were quite a child. Well, I am glad to have had this "crack," as your husband would call it, alone with you; it reminds me of the old days at Bedivere; does it not?—My dear Mrs Ferrier, what is the matter! I hope to heaven that you do not regret them?' The kind old doctor took Gwendoline's hand in his, and stroked it tenderly, for the large tears were rolling down her cheeks.

'No, doctor,' said she fervently, 'I do not regret them; I am happier now than ever I was in my life—if the cause were only removed for which I weep; and I think that it lies in your power to remove it.'

'Then consider it already removed, dear Gwendoline,' said the doctor affectionately. 'I have always considered myself *in loco parentis* to you—a sort of flying buttress of a father, and feel none the less so because you have married Mr Ferrier—a good husband, I am sure, if ever there was one.'

'Yes, indeed, doctor; the best of husbands; and

a far better one than I deserve. It is because I respect, nay, reverence him so deeply, that I am now in sorrow. I can think of nothing else—I could not even listen to what you have been telling me just now, though I bade you go on with your stories. I wished to put off as long as possible the moment which has now arrived, when I have to speak of my husband's illness.'

'His illness! surely you are mistaken there. Mr Ferrier is, without doubt, more feeble and languid than I should wish to see him; and I am glad, for his sake, that all those fine folks have left the house; but a little quiet will soon bring him round, believe me.'

Gwendoline shook her head with a sad smile. 'Perhaps there is not much the matter, doctor; but there is more than you think. Do you recollect what you had been saying, when he rose and left the room so abruptly, about palpitation of the heart?'

'Yes; I said that a drop of prussic acid in a wine-glass of water was sometimes given in such cases.'

'Just so. Then he got up at once, if you remember. He did so, I feel certain, because he was afraid of my speaking of his symptoms to you in his presence. You know his morbid horror—so different from papa—of being doctored, or having anything said of his own ailments. Yet Bruce's notion is that he has got heart-disease.'

'Stuff and nonsense!' exclaimed Dr Gisborne decisively. 'That's all his fancy; he has nothing of the sort.'

'I am truly delighted to hear you say so; but he is fully persuaded that he *has*. It may be, as you say, only his fancy; but you know what a strong hold such fancies take in old—in those who are not young. Bruce is exceedingly nervous and worried about himself, and, of course, that worries me.'

'You astonish me, my dear Mrs Ferrier, with this account of your husband. I should have thought that if there had been one man in the world less subject to morbid notions about the state of his own health, it was Bruce Ferrier.'

'But then you are not his wife, you know,' sighed Gwendoline, with a faint smile. 'To you he would doubtless always appear so. If you were to offer to prescribe for him now, he would protest there was nothing the matter with him; men are so queer. He got almost angry the other day when I proposed that he should consult you on the matter: but yet he himself proposed the very remedy of which you were just speaking—and it was a most curious coincidence your happening to do so—of a drop of prussic acid in water. He certainly does suffer from palpitation; but then, as I told him, nothing should induce me to let him try so dangerous a remedy without your approval. Now, if you will only humour him so far as to write out a prescription, I will take care that he does not take the medicine oftener than is absolutely necessary. I daresay, if the palpitations are mere nervousness, that the knowledge that he has the remedy at hand will be sufficient without actually taking it.'

'Yes,' mused the doctor thoughtfully: 'of course, there can be no harm in his taking one drop (which of course you will see he does not exceed) in a wine-glass of water. But I don't much like recommending such a dangerous medicine; there are others'—

'You will do as you think proper, of course, dear Dr Gisborne; but I must say that I am afraid that nothing but prussic acid will satisfy Bruce. He has taken the whim into his head that that will do him good; and I am sure he will have no confidence in anything else.'

'Then, by all means, my dear Mrs Ferrier, let him be humoured so far.' And Dr Gisborne sat down and wrote the prescription as she had requested. 'I will leave it at the chemist's to-night on my way home, if you wish it,' said he.

'There is no necessity for that; thank you, doctor,' answered Gwendoline carelessly. 'I shall be driving over to St Medards to-morrow, I have no doubt, and I will call at the shop myself.' Which accordingly, on the afternoon of the ensuing day, Mrs Ferrier did. She was waited upon by Mr Samuel Barland in person, who made up the prescription, and placed the bottle in her own hands. Some weeks afterwards, Gwendoline informed Dr Gisborne with a grateful smile that her husband had scarcely ever complained of palpitations since he had had the remedy in the house; and nothing more was said about the matter.

CHAPTER XX.—THE WILL AND THE WAY.

A year has passed since Mr Ferrier's second marriage. He is more devoted to his beautiful wife—whose charms indeed have increased as they have matured—than ever, though the haunting sense that he is unable to cope with her gloved-iron will, grows upon him too. He is placid and happy, except that it somewhat frets him that they have no child.

That Gwendoline's good behaviour is a matter by no means 'put on' for a time, even Mrs Barland is constrained to own; little Eady, now two years old, and marvellously like her Italian mother, is almost as fond of her as is Marion, who is nearly six, a quiet and thoughtful little creature—'quite a companion,' as the saying is, to her father, and a most patient playfellow with her small sister.

Strange to say, in the society of this sweet child, with whose affectionate simplicity is mingled a sort of motherly virtue and grown-up good sense, Gwendoline is secretly ill at ease. Her innocence, her unselfish nature, and (especially) her simple trustfulness in herself (Gwendoline), seem so many reproaches to her; they sometimes compel her to reflect—and reflection has become hateful to her. A correspondence is kept up between herself and her lover, but it is mostly on one side—*her* side. Piers writes but seldom, and then only short letters, the tone of which is even more unsatisfactory than the actual contents. He finds the chain that links them—so much more binding in his case than any legitimate tie would have been—intolerably burdensome, and she perceives it. Yet, she cannot endure to relinquish her designs, and give him up, but is madly devoted to him still. Mr Ferrier has aged considerably, and is growing mentally more feeble, but there is no appearance of their marriage being annulled by the Great Divorcer. Her husband may live on for years. With his feebleness has come over him a touching tenderness of manner and feeling towards all about him; he had never been harsh, but that sturdy matter-of-fact character, which was almost stern, is visibly softening. To Gwendoline,

indeed, he has been always tender; and his fond reliance upon her increases, notwithstanding she is more haughty and imperious with him than of old.

They were alone together one evening (as they usually were now), when Mr Ferrier made an unexpected but not unhopd-for communication. 'My darling,' said he, 'I daresay you would never guess what I have been so busy about the last few days. I have been making my will.'

'Your will, Bruce?' returned she quietly, though a sudden flush tinged her pale cheeks in spite of herself. 'What made you think of that? There are many years of happiness in store for you yet, I trust.'

'I trust so too, darling—some years, at all events. But I am getting an old man, and the hope which I had entertained—— But there, let me explain to you what I have done.'

'My dear Bruce, you know that I never could understand business matters; things that are so easy to you, are to me so difficult—I know I shall never comprehend you.' But she pushed aside the embroidery-frame at which she was engaged, and gave herself up to listen to him, for all that.

'My darling,' he began again, 'if you were of a self-seeking and ambitious nature, which I am sure you are not, I should not make known to you, as I am about to do, the disposition of my property, but leave you to learn it after my death; and if you were inclined to be jealous of my dear children, in place of being as good a mother to them as though they were your own flesh and blood, I should also keep silence, for I have considered them in my will far more than I have considered you; still, you will have no reason to complain, I hope.'

'I am sure I shall not, dear Bruce—quite sure. But why should you pain me by talking of such things; you are healthy and strong, and there will be time enough years hence to enter upon this subject.'

'No, dear Gwendoline, there will not—or, at least, there may not be time. While my mind is still vigorous and able to attend to such matters, I prefer to speak of them to you. Between us two there should be no secrets, nor a single subject which we cannot venture to discuss.'

'Of course there should be no secrets,' said Gwendoline. 'But as respects a will, there always seems to be some embarrassment'——

'I feel none, my darling,' interrupted Mr Ferrier fondly. 'I know that I can never be misunderstood nor misjudged by you. Why not hear from my own lips, what you will certainly hear sooner or later from those of a stranger, while I—when I am lying dead, and you will no longer be chained to an old husband, to whom you may one day, perhaps, have to be as much nurse as wife?'

'I cannot listen to this, dear Bruce,' said Gwendoline, covering her eyes with her right hand, while her husband held her other captive in his own. 'You distress me more than I can say. I would rather even hear the will itself, than such sad talk. Have you got the document here?—not that it matters; it is sure to be all seals, and tapes, and gibberish.'

Considering that 'it did not matter,' Mrs Ferrier's face wore certainly a look of interest as she put this question, and when the answer came: 'No, darling, I have not got the will, for I sent it to my

London lawyer yesterday for safe keeping,' the shadow of a cloud flitted across her brow.

'The conditions, Gwendoline, although very simple, are in the document itself set forth with the usual prolixity, and you will understand them from my mouth far better than in lawyers' phraseology.—Well, then, first with regard to your dear self, you will of course have your jointure; and in addition I have bequeathed to you sufficient plate and furniture to set up with in a house of your own, should circumstances ever cause the dear girls and you to part.'

'That will never be,' said Gwendoline earnestly. 'Not while your affectionate care can be of use to them, darling, of that I feel quite assured. But if they were both to marry, for instance, they would doubtless each have establishments separate from your own.'

'Just so,' assented Gwendoline; 'I had forgotten; it seemed so impossible that the dear children and myself should ever live apart.'

'I have also bequeathed you my jewels: in my poor opinion you should always wear jewels, darling; they become you, and you become them, so fitly. I have also left you what I refused to leave you before we married, and when your unselfish goodness, of which I have now had so satisfactory an experience, was comparatively untried—I have left you sole guardian to my two daughters.'

A light of triumph, which she strove in vain to quench, came into Gwendoline's eyes.

'Yes, darling, that is your just reward, and I am glad to see how much it pleases you. You are their sole guardian; but I have appointed Mr Tudor, my lawyer, your co-trustee. While my daughters are under age, you will be allowed four thousand pounds a year for their maintenance and education, which sum, in case of the demise of either, will not be reduced. Glen Druid is also to be maintained as your residence, at the expense of the estate, and on its present footing. The remainder of the income accruing from the property is to be invested in government securities, for the benefit of the children. Even at present, I am able to leave each of them what will represent at least seven thousand pounds a year; and in the event of either dying under age, the whole will then revert to the survivor, who will have the absolute disposal of it upon her coming of age. In the event of either or both marrying before their majority, this arrangement will still hold good, for I am sure that you will take care that their husbands are honourable and trustworthy persons—to whom, if you can intrust my sweet girls, you may surely intrust their money.'

Gwendoline listened in silence. Mr Ferrier was deeply affected, not only by what he had said, but by what he had in his mind, and was about to say. 'I hope, my darling, that this disposition of my property is such as you approve? I have left you what is more precious to me than all my riches—my Marion and my Edith.'

'You have been most kind, dear Bruce, indeed. I trust that I may prove myself worthy of such affectionate confidence.'

'I have no doubt of that, Gwendoline, not a shadow of doubt. I have only to add, that in case—that in case we should be blessed with a child of our own (though, should we be so, I can hardly fancy your love for it being greater than it is for the little ones which Giulia gave me), this

disposition of my property will of course be materially altered. God has given me much increase in the basket and in the store, and there will be enough and to spare for all.'

It was as much as Mr Ferrier's mental and bodily strength would permit to compass this statement and to express it with clear conciseness. The task was itself an effort, and the considerations which it suggested affected him deeply. It was distressing to him to think of that day (in all human probability, at no great distance) when he should be parted from his Gwendoline.

Mrs Ferrier, too, seemed much distressed by the nature of this communication. For some days afterwards she appeared moody and silent, and when she could be spared from the nursery—which was just now a hospital, since both the children had whooping-cough, though of a mild character—she took long solitary walks, in the course of which she revolved many things. On one of these occasions she met Susan Barland, to whom her manner was always gracious, while, on the other hand, Susan was respectful and solicitous about her welfare; women in all ranks of life being equal proficient in hypocrisy towards foes of their own sex—and also, it may be added, as equally failing to impose upon one another.

Susan was quite distressed at seeing Mrs Ferrier look so poorly, and 'unlike herself.'

'Well, Susan,' answered she frankly, 'I am not well; there is nothing amiss with my bodily health indeed, but I am sadly worried. I don't mind telling you, who are such an old friend of the family, but Mr Ferrier's state of health makes me very uneasy. He has got his old palpitations again, and is constantly complaining of giddiness, and it is so difficult to know what to do—to make him take care of himself without frightening him, which would be the worst thing in the world, and indeed, with his heart-disease, might be fatal at any moment.'

'Lor, ma'am, has Mr Ferrier got heart-disease?' exclaimed Susan, really shocked by this intelligence.

'Hush, yes; but don't talk about it, for fear it should get round to his own ears, which, to say the least, would annoy him terribly. I hate to talk of it myself, Susan, though I can't help thinking of it, as you perceive.—You are going up to see our little ones, I suppose; they are much better, I am glad to say; but you are always welcome in the nursery, you know, whenever you like to come. I hope they give you a good cup of tea, and treat you well?'

'Very well, I thank you, ma'am.'

'I am delighted to hear it.—We are to have a grand ball—not that it is my wish, but Mr Ferrier says we have seen nothing of anybody for so long—on the 31st, as I daresay you have heard. If you would like to come up and hear the music, I daresay Jane can make you up a bed somewhere. If Mr Barland will give you leave then—for we who are wives are not our own masters—come by all means.—I hope your husband is well? Good-morning, Susan.'

Mrs Barland never conversed with the mistress of Glen Druid except in the shortest sentences, and used as few of them as she decently could. She was always glad to get away from her, as from an adversary with whom she was no match at tongue-fence; and Gwendoline was rather amused at this cowardice than otherwise. She knew that she was no favourite of the woman's; but she made

the great mistake of despising her foe: the enmity of no one—and especially of one whom we have wronged, and afterwards patronised—ought to be despised.

Susan did not discredit Mrs Ferrier's statement about her husband, although she entirely rejected the idea that she was looking ill from 'worry' upon his account. The worse he was—in Susan's view—the better Gwendoline would be pleased, for she had only taken him for his money, and when he died, would probably marry that young gentleman whom she had seen her flirting with upon the Warrior's Helm. 'She was a deep one, she was, if ever a woman was deep.' Directly Susan got home, she reported to her husband the whole of the late conversation, but with an addendum with respect to his having kept her in the dark about Mr Ferrier's state of health. 'Since,' said she, 'you must have surely known about it, as you make up his prescriptions.'

'Yes,' said he, in his philosophic way, 'I give him something—what is it?—drops—for these palpitations, I suppose. But I don't think there's much amiss with the old gentleman. Besides, people's diseases are not my business, but only the nasty things they take for 'em. You had better ask Dr Gisborne.'

Accordingly, the next day, when Susan, coming out of the lodge-gates at Glen Druid, happened to meet the doctor, about to pay a professional visit to the nursery, and he, as an old acquaintance, stopped to speak with her, she ventured to ask him point-blank whether her old master had really heart-disease or not.

'Pooh, pooh!—heart-disease?—No,' was the doctor's reply. 'He has no more heart-disease than I have: it's all stuff; but he is as full of whims as an egg's full of meat.'

'Well, sir, Mrs Ferrier thinks he has at all events.'

'The more fool she, if she does. Her husband thinks so, I daresay, but then there is no limit to what nervous people will imagine is the matter with them in the way of disease.'

'Well, sir, at all events, I do hope he will do himself no harm by taking those drops so constant.'

'What! what's that?' exclaimed the doctor, pulling his horse sharply up, just after he had given him the spur. 'What drops?'

'Why, them drops for the palpitations. Samuel says he makes them up very constant.'

'I must see to that,' said the doctor gravely. 'It is all very well for folks to be fanciful, but they must not indulge themselves in what is hurtful. I am glad you spoke, Mrs Barland. Good-morning.' And Dr Gisborne was speaking to Gwendoline herself upon the subject within five minutes. 'I say,' exclaimed he, 'what's this I hear about your husband having these drops so often from the chemist's? That won't do, you know, my dear Mrs Ferrier, at all. I said particularly they were only to be given when he had—or fancied he had—those palpitations.'

'My dear doctor,' returned Gwendoline, smiling, 'how like that is to the stories of your good folks at St Medards! It is a most ludicrous exaggeration, I assure you. The fact is, that the first bottle was accidentally broken, so I ordered a second; and then, fearing a similar misfortune at a time when Bruce might be nervous and uneasy, a third. He has scarcely taken a dose since I told you he was so much better.'

'Oh, that alters the case; but I think I had better just give him a word of warning.'

'Pray, don't, doctor; I earnestly beg of you not to do so. You have no idea how nervous he is, and the very mention of the subject would, I am confident, be quite sufficient to bring on an attack—to make him apply the very remedy the use of which you deprecate.'

'Very good,' said Dr Gisborne; 'then I will say nothing more about it; only be careful.'

TORPEDOES AND HARBOUR-DEFENCES.

THE contest between ships and guns has apparently reached its limit at last. It is now generally admitted that guns can be constructed to penetrate any armour under which a ship can float; and although invulnerable land-forts can no doubt be erected, their extreme cost must always prevent them from entering largely into any general system of coast-defence. On the other hand, it does not follow that a ship will necessarily be sunk or disabled by guns capable of piercing her sides. The artillery-man who can aim within a hair-breadth of the mark on the practice-ground at Shoeburyness, will scarcely be equally sure of hitting a moving object in a sea-way, amidst the smoke and excitement of battle; still less if he himself must take his stand on the shifting platform of a 'crank' iron-clad. Even of the shots which reach their mark, the majority will either miss a vital part, or glance off from the rounded plates; and it may fairly be assumed, for practical calculations, that vessels, especially of the *Monitor* type, will keep a battery of nine, or even twelve inch guns employed for some time before they are finally placed *hors de combat*. We say of the *Monitor* type, not only because it is possible to render turrets almost invulnerable, while the low free-board and comparative invisibility of the rest of the vessel may be considered equivalent to several additional inches of plating in the case of a broadside ship, but also because, if ever this country is engaged in war, it is with vessels of this class that we shall probably have to deal.

Assuming, then, that no iron-clad, except, perhaps, one of the 'egg-shell fleet,'* can be disposed of, under ordinary circumstances, off-hand, it becomes an important question, how best to defend our harbours and dockyards against such assailants, and that without the drawbacks of an expenditure, which, though sanctioned for once under the government of Lord Palmerston, could scarcely be repeated. The experience of the Civil War in America made it abundantly clear (1) that batteries alone are inadequate to prevent the passage of a hostile squadron, and (2) that no enemy can force his way in the teeth of batteries combined with submarine obstacles. The latter range themselves under two heads: barriers to impede the progress of the assailants, and detain them under the fire of the forts; and mines and torpedoes to blow up the ships with which they come in contact. Both these expedients were adopted by the Confederates with marked success; and since then, the science of submarine defence has received further illustration both in theory and in practice. Sunken chains and torpedoes kept the Brazilian squadron for

many months below the batteries of Humaita, and would have kept them there till the present moment, had not the floods of the Paraguay frustrated the calculations of Lopez.

The American Maury and the Austrian Ebner have invented means by which the torpedo can be exploded at any moment from the shore by the medium of electricity; and in the plans now preparing for the defence of Kiel and the Jahde, torpedoes and sunken obstacles form an important feature. The idea of blowing up a ship by the discharge of gunpowder beneath her bottom is of very ancient date, and something of the kind was attempted as early as the sieges of Antwerp (1583) and Rochelle (1627). A torpedo-boat, an invention of which more will probably be heard before long, was constructed by Bushnell during the War of Independence. Fulton, in 1804, blew up a brig by means of a floating torpedo, the drawings of which were in existence a year or two ago; and a machine of the same kind, which was wound up by clock-work, and attached by hand to the hostile ship, was tried unsuccessfully during the blockade of Brest. The celebrated Paixhans, in 1811, worked at a submarine missile on the principle of the rocket; and a similar projectile by a British inventor was submitted to the Admiralty in 1862; we know not with what result.

The Crimean war opened a wide field for mechanical ingenuity. In 1853, Professor Jacobi undertook the defence of Cronstadt by the aid of torpedoes; but some of these were so imperfectly constructed that they got out of order after prolonged immersion; and with others, so many precautions were taken to avoid accidents, that the machine would not explode when it was wanted to do so. The idea, however, had now taken root; and, in 1859, the Austrians at Venice prepared a complete system of submarine defences, in which electricity was employed for the first time, and which, in all probability, preserved the port from an attack by the Franco-Italian fleet. The full merit, however, of torpedoes, as an instrument of defence, was not recognised till the American Civil War, when the destruction of upwards of twenty ships, and the total repulse of a formidable iron-clad fleet at Charleston, first drew the attention of the public to their value. The Confederates could only employ the electrical torpedo sparingly. The strict blockade precluded them from procuring a sufficient supply of cables, and thus the torpedoes of this class were few, and when out of order were not easily repaired. The *New Ironsides*, on one occasion, lay over one of them for more than an hour, without the operator on shore being able to fire the charge. Besides this, the system was still too imperfect to admit of the torpedoes being laid at any considerable distance from the land: they were ignited by the men in charge completing the electric circuit at the moment when a Federal vessel passed the spot, and the danger of exposure and detection was consequently very great. Hence, the Confederates mostly used self-acting torpedoes, which exploded on coming into contact with a ship. In all these, ignition was effected on the principle originally introduced by Jacobi. A glass phial containing sulphuric acid, and protected by various contrivances against the impact of the waves and objects of moderate weight, was so placed as to be broken by a passing ship, when its contents falling upon lime, produced the explosion.

* The name given by Americans to the *Minotaur* and her sister-ships, which have only nine inches of backing.

Torpedoes thus constructed were employed in various ways. Some were fixed to a species of submarine barricade, which was kept in its place by heavy weights, usually sunken rails; others were buoyed up with pieces of light wood, and strongly moored at a certain distance below the surface. These last were the invention of General Raines, and proved the most successful of all. In form they were somewhat different from the fixed torpedoes. The explosive material was contained in a sort of stud, which projected from the surface of the machine, and communicated with the charge by a tube filled with powder which had been moistened in alcohol. There were several of these studs, so that no vessel could graze the torpedo without impinging upon one of them. They had, however, two defects: when once sunk, they were equally dangerous to both parties; and in harbours where the rise and fall of the tide were very great, it was not possible to moor them so as to escape detection at low water.

The electric torpedo has recently been brought to great perfection by Maury and Ebner. By taking the bearings of each when laid from three land stations simultaneously, their exact position is ascertained, and a friendly squadron can retreat over them; while the pursuers, in attempting to follow, would be instantly blown up by the operators from the shore. The mechanism is so contrived that it can only be set in motion by the impact of a ship, and even then no explosion follows until the electric circuit is completed from all three stations. Mistakes are therefore almost impossible; and the cables which connect the torpedoes with the shore may even be used for the purpose of telegraphing from one station to another. The electric light enables operations to be carried on by night as well as by day; a dense fog is the only obstacle which it has been found impossible to overcome. The expense, however, for cables, &c. is considerable, especially as torpedoes can only act within certain limits, and must therefore be laid very close together.

The Reports of the Commission presided over by Colonel Jervois, as well as of those which have been appointed for the same purpose in Germany, have naturally been withheld from the public. It is, however, generally understood that new agents, such as the compressed gun-cotton of Professor Abel, will produce much greater effect than any charge hitherto used. Still, no torpedo is believed to be capable of inflicting serious injury at any great distance. Even four feet of water has been known to neutralise a charge of one thousand pounds of gunpowder; and powerful as gun-cotton, nitro-glycerine, or dualine may be, it will still be necessary to sow torpedoes not more than a hundred feet apart.

Many other questions present themselves for consideration. We have seen that it is impossible, when the rise and fall of the tide are very great, to moor Raines's torpedoes so as to escape observation. On the other hand, barricades to support fixed torpedoes will often prove unable to resist the sweep of a strong tidal current. Hence, when the passage to be defended is very deep and broad, more permanent obstacles are desirable—floating forts, on which the heaviest ordnance can be mounted, artificial islands, and the like. The space between these may be set with self-acting torpedoes, and the passages which it is advisable to leave open for the use of the defenders with electric ones

after the designs of Ebner. Submarine barriers are at all times difficult to construct. Chains can be burst asunder by petards. The best constructed barricades of wood and iron are apt to give way from their own weight. Perhaps the most ingenious as well as the cheapest obstacle was one employed by the Confederates at Charleston. Thick cables, to which thin cords were attached, were moored loosely but firmly below the surface. On the approach of a hostile flotilla, the thin ropes worked themselves round the screws, and drew the cables after them, thus effectually bringing the steamer to a stand-still. After the terrible failure of Admiral Dupont, the Federals did not again venture to come too close, but a friendly steamer which accidentally became entangled in the ropes could not get free for more than two hours.

Hitherto, torpedoes have been regarded solely with a view to defensive operations. It remains to be seen how far they are available for the attack. In the American War they were often floated down stream against the blockading squadrons, but the nets with which the Federals protected the bows of their ships invariably intercepted them. The destruction of the (Federal) *Houssatonic* and the (Confederate) *Albemarle* from torpedo-boats, must be ascribed to the daring of the assailants far more than to the excellence of the machine. Experiments, however, are going on in various countries, and it is possible that, before long, an efficient torpedo-boat will be designed. The great difficulty hitherto has been to construct one which can be steered under water. The true direction is generally lost at once, and often the boat reappears, to the amazement of its crew, at the very spot where it was submerged. The Austrians are understood to be trying experiments with magnetic boats which will be attracted by the iron of the hostile ships, and a North German inventor is reported to be on the eve of some wonderful discovery. Quite recently, too, attempts have been made to ascertain the practicability of guiding the course of torpedoes launched from a vessel, pretty much as boys regulate the flight of a kite. As yet, however, this branch of the science of submarine warfare has received less attention than it deserves.

THE FATAL BOUQUET.

WHAT may be the ordinary price of such a bouquet as a bride-maid generally carries to assist her in the sometimes difficult duty of appearing irresistible, I cannot say; but the only one I ever had anything to do with cost me dear, as will be seen. Never, O my friends, make rash promises; or, if you do, don't keep them; and in after-days it will be a comfort to you to reflect that you were not so good as your word. It was many years ago that I was obliged to be present at no less melancholy a ceremony than a wedding; and it has cast a cloud over all my subsequent life. It was a lovely afternoon in summer; Zephyr and Aurora had been joined together in holy matrimony; the cake had been cut; the champagne had flowed; the chariot had carried off the infatuated pair; the slipper had been thrown; the tears had been shed; and everybody was as dull as ditch-water. I sat and talked with Arabella, who had been one of the bride-maids. Whether a bride-maid now-a-days carries her bouquet as Arabella's was then carried, I cannot tell (for I now live

much 'out of the world'), but hers was carried by means of a ring at the end of a sort of cornucopia, in which were stuck the sweetest of flowers. What we said, I do not (fortunately) recollect; but the rite lately performed had undoubtedly exercised a singular influence, so that eyes were more than usually eloquent, voices were more than usually soft and low, and conversation was more than usually sentimental and, I am afraid, absurd. At last, however, it was somehow brought to pass that Arabella said playfully: 'Very well, then, on one condition.'

'What is it?' I asked eagerly.

'That you carry it exactly as I do, and that you take it with you wherever you go to-day.'

'These are very easy terms,' I rejoined; 'and I am only too glad to accept them.'

All that followed I cannot remember; but my ears, when I think of the scene, are once more filled with a sound as of a low, but pleasant laughing chorus, or rather duet; and my lips, when I think of the scene, feel once more the touch of a something softer than velvet. And that something had four fingers and a thumb. Such a pretty thumb! It was as much prettier than ordinary thumbs as a dimple is prettier than a knuckle.

Well, I took the bouquet, and I hung it by the ring on my little finger; and all at once I began to feel uncommonly like a fool. I had said that I accepted the conditions gladly; now I knew that I had spoken in my haste, and that most men who speak in their haste are liars. So I took mournful leave of Arabella, who, as I departed, called out: 'Mind, I shall see you to-morrow, and shall require a full, true, and particular account of all that befalls my bouquet.'

I replied—gaily, as some people say; that is, incoherently, and with a hysterical giggle.

My trials began as soon as I was outside the door, for a sympathetic cabman at once discerning my bellowed condition, whipped his horse into a gallop and proffered the safe refuge of hisansom. But I hadn't three hundred yards to go, and it seemed ridiculous for a poor and economical man to ride that short distance. However, if you are under the impression that in a free country, such as we have the happiness to 'move on' in, a man, who not only has on a wedding-garment (which is of itself a dangerous thing to wear in the streets), but also carries a bouquet hanging by a ring from his little finger, can walk three hundred yards on the Queen's highway with impunity, you had better try it. All I know is, I couldn't. The cabman, unable to comprehend my refusal under the circumstances, drove close against the kerbstone, keeping pace with me as I went, touching his hat at intervals, ejaculating compassionately: 'Keb, sir; you'd better 'ev a keb—you did indeed,' and so exposing me to a thousand times as much notice as I should otherwise have attracted. Little boys having their attention especially aroused by the cabman, considered the occasion favourable for a demonstration, which threatened to take the form of shying all manner of dirt; and older persons who encountered me, either appeared to consider that I had mistaken a bright day in June for the fifth of November, and laughed derisively, or regarded me with such looks as the priest and the Levite must have bestowed upon the poor wounded man who had fallen amongst thieves, and evidently set me down as a thing to be avoided

like the plague. Only a few girls and matrons, who sniffed a wedding from afar, and consequently felt a pleasant titillation after their kind, smiled a tacit approval.

At last I reached my lodgings, and breathed freely. I placed my precious bouquet in water, and sat down, and gazed at it, and meditated. And, as I meditated, it occurred to me that Arabella, who had not parted with her bouquet without some few minutes' reflection, had ultimately given it to me with a design. She had sighed a little sigh, and had given me a very peculiar glance after she had committed her flowers to my keeping; and now, as I sat and pondered, the meaning of the sigh and the glance was, I flattered myself, intelligible. Arabella was not indifferent to me. I had tried to elicit whether she were or not, but could not get anything definite from her; but now I could interpret what was in her heart. 'You bachelors,' she had doubtless thought, 'go and banish the thoughts awakened by the event of this morning by means of your billiards and your smoking, and your selfish dissipation, whilst we maidens have to sit at home, and mope and gnaw our hearts, and feed on tender recollections, and nourish scarcely acknowledged hopes; but I have discovered a way of keeping one bachelor in order; he dares not go among those who would scoff at my gift; and by the fate that befalls my bouquet, I shall know how he estimates the giver.' And now a shiver came over me as I remembered that I was engaged to dine out; and I *must* take that bouquet with me. Arabella could not surely have intended that I should carry her flowers with me into the drawing-room and then into the dining-room, and afterwards at dinner; why, I should never have got out of the house alive. Her words were, 'Wherever you go, and my promise would be satisfactorily fulfilled if I carried the bouquet into the house with me, and left it in safe custody.'

To the man who took my over-coat, therefore, I committed the flowers, with the strictest injunctions to take particular care of them; and he answered fervently that he would, but gave me a leer which would have justified a breach of the peace. And I couldn't help thinking, during dinner, that the wretch had made confidants of his fellow-servants, for I saw three of them examining me closely, and with twinkling eyes, from the opposite side of the table. Could the host, too, have seen the flowers in the hall, asked to whom they belonged, and imparted the information he gained to his wife? If not, why should she have told *me* in particular that certain sherry was 'amoroso?' And why should she have commended *me* in particular for choosing 'parfait amour' from other liqueurs? Other people shewed the same preference. It may have been accidental; but conscience makes all of us suspicious. About eleven o'clock I took my departure; reassumed my bouquet about as joyfully as Christian reassumed his bundle; and with a heavy heart found myself in a cabless thoroughfare not far from King's Road, Chelsea. It was quite three miles to my lodgings, but in the King's Road I should be sure to find a cab in which I might hide myself and my bouquet. But suddenly a well-known voice cried: 'Don't run away, Brown.'

I turned, and there was my very best friend, Jones, who, once upon a time, when I had been very roughly handled in a public journal, took the trouble to cut out the whole article, and send it to

me—'In case,' as he said, I 'should like to see it.' I had never forgotten that friendly attention (especially as he professed not to read the papers generally, and never saw several articles of an opposite character), and I therefore accosted him with extreme cordiality.

'What is the matter?' he asked; 'you seem out of sorts.'

'I have had rather a trying day,' I answered: 'a wedding this morning, and a dinner-party this evening.'

'No wonder you are low,' said he sympathetically: 'you want a cigar and a cheerful scene. But what is the matter with your left arm?' he concluded.

'Nothing at all,' I replied sharply, producing the bouquet, which I had held in concealment behind my back.

'You call that nothing, do you?' said Jones severely: 'I call it a very serious thing indeed. But don't look so miserable; take this cigar, and come with me—but first throw that thing over the railings of the square.'

'For your cigar, thanks; for your last advice, I'll see you—I mean I wouldn't do it for a thousand pounds.'

'Oh, I see. Well, we can leave it with the man at the gates.'

'What gates?'

'Come and see. I am a few pegs too low myself; and before I go home, I mean to try the effect of some lively music and a lively spectacle.'

We had been walking along pretty briskly all this while, and in a few more minutes we arrived at some gates, which appeared to lead into some illuminated gardens, and which were themselves surmounted by a gigantic and brilliant gas-lit star.

'I'm not going in *there*,' said I bluntly.

'Oh, just take a stroll round,' he rejoined coaxingly; 'it will do you good. The gardens are cool, the music is cheerful, and the dancing will make you die of laughing. Besides, you wouldn't leave me all alone.'

In an evil hour, I paid my money, and passed through the turnstile; and then I feared to leave my flowers in charge of the gate-keeper. It was different at a friend's house; but at this public place the precious bouquet might come to harm. The man, too, was very reluctant to take it; said he would not himself be at his post much longer, and would have to deliver over my trust to his successor. I did not like the prospect; and determined not to part with my treasure.

Jones was a little sulky at first, and said in a surly tone: 'You'll get awfully chaffed, my boy;' but suddenly he cheered up again, as if his very words had somehow comforted him.

He was quite right; I did get awfully chaffed; but I adopted the tactics of appearing to have been let out for the evening from the Deaf and Dumb Institution. But to Jones I was forced to be as one that heard; and he played to a marvel the part of the kind friend. His ears seemed to have become all at once supernaturally sharp, so that not even a whisper to my disparagement escaped him; and he faithfully imparted to me whatever he heard. My equanimity was gradually disturbed, and, at last, when Jones asked in a tone of horror: 'Did you hear what that fellow said?' I answered angrily: 'No, I did not; and I don't want to know.'

But Jones, having, perhaps, a keener regard for his friend's honour than for his own, rejoined: 'Well, old fellow, there's a limit to everything, and I don't think you ought to stand *that*.'

I inwardly wondered whether Jones himself, in my position, would not have stood *that*, and much more, without shewing his valour; but with a groan I asked: 'Well, what *did* he say?'

'Oh, my dear fellow,' replied Jones with a snigger, 'I shouldn't like to repeat it.'

'Can you point the man out?' I inquired.

This Jones did with surprising alacrity.

'Let us go back and ask *him*, then,' I said, trying to appear cool and comfortable.

The man whom Jones pointed out was dressed as a gentleman, was considerably bigger in every way than I, and was sitting between two wearers of bonnets, whom we may charitably assume to have been his wife and his mother-in-law. At my approach he shewed some slight perturbation, which led me to hope that he suffered, as I do, from a constitutional weakness (nothing more, I assure you), which some people mistake for what is in certain circles called 'the funks.' I was encouraged, therefore, to ask with some haughtiness whether he would oblige me by repeating the remark he had lately addressed to me. He obliged me with a readiness and emphasis which slightly altered my opinion about his constitutional weakness, and which almost reduced me to an awkward silence, which Jones might have misinterpreted. Fortunately, however, I was inspired to make a general remark about the difficulty of properly kicking any gentleman who happens to be sitting upon a bench; and the remark, notwithstanding its truth and generality, so far from meeting with his approbation, caused him to start up in a fury, threaten damage to my nose with his left fist, and seize my precious bouquet with his right hand. Thereupon flashed across my mind a piece of advice to the effect that 'the threatened should never wait for accomplishment, but should always take the initiative;' and so, maddened at the destruction which was being wrought upon my bouquet, I dashed my clenched right hand into the face of my adversary, who staggered back against a tree, and left upon my white glove a red stain.

There were shrieks from the supposed wife and supposed mother-in-law (one of whom promptly scratched my face), and a yell of delight from Jones, whose object had probably now been accomplished, without any inconvenience to himself. My adversary quickly recovered himself, and returned to the attack; but either I had been right, after all, in my surmise about his constitutional weakness (and his knees really did tremble more than mine), or the heathen deities still interpose in favour of mortal men, for my burly opponent gave me by no means tit for tat (though he had no gloves on)—grazed me just once upon the left temple, and on closing was, to my surprise, thrown flat upon his back. He rose, and shewed the greatest inclination to test the tenacity with which my hair was fixed upon my head, and the consequence was that it was difficult to avoid closing a second time, when down he went again on his back (by a miracle, I should say), and dragged me down atop of him. I should have got up again as soon as possible, but he seemed to derive some incomprehensible satisfaction from

rubbing the back of his head to and fro in the gravel, and holding me in a tight embrace. As we lay, I was conscious of a rending of garments, and in a moment there appeared on either side of our prostrate bodies a leg, which I recognised as Jones's; and I could dimly perceive that Jones was astride of us, and was keeping off a yelling crowd by whirling round and round his head a something which I could not quite distinguish.

The whole affair had lasted but a few minutes; and now the authorities appeared upon the scene; and popular opinion being against me, I was declared to have been in the wrong, and was summarily ejected, after about twenty minutes' enjoyment of Jones's 'cheerful scene.' Dogberry, with his usual sense of justice, would not even let me look for my hat, so I took the liberty of putting on my adversary's, which immediately fell down upon my shoulders, and gave me an opportunity of gauging his size.

As soon as we were outside the gates, Jones shewed his regard for me by patting me on the shoulder, and saying: 'Bravo! old boy; you did remarkably well. If I were you, I should wait until he comes out, and then finish the business.'

Now, I am by no means what pugilists term a 'glutton'; I considered not only that I had done remarkably well, but also that I had been very lucky. I was a deplorable object to look at, no doubt—with my adversary's hat, which would not be restrained from dropping right over my head; with my face covered with blood (from the bonnet-wearer's scratch); with my white tie undone, and crumpled up like an ill-made spill; with my shirt-front bespattered with red spots, and with one of the tails torn completely off my over-coat: but I was personally uninjured, with the exception of the scratch, and a very slight contusion of the left temple; whereas, considering my adversary's size, I ought to have been pounded to a jelly.

I therefore replied to Jones's kind suggestion: 'My dear Jones, I am very much indebted to you for to-night's work, for if I had been alone, I should have allowed myself, in the most pusillanimous manner, to be insulted to any extent short of personal violence. I therefore cheerfully resign to you the conclusion of the business you are good enough to say I have thus far conducted successfully; be my *alter ego*; wait for my adversary, finish him off, and welcome. As for me, I shall be off by the first cab.'

But that self-denying Jones declined to 'take my leaveings' (as he put it), and insisted upon seeing me safe to my lodgings. As we rode along, I demanded of Jones what had become of my bouquet, and learned that it had been 'torn to smithereens'; and what he had whirled round his head to keep the people off, and learned that it was the rent-off coat-tail, with 'something heavyish in it.' I couldn't tell Jones that the 'something heavyish' was the prayer-book Arabella had lent me (with her name in it too) that very morning, for Jones has such queer ideas of a joke. He actually laughed when he told me that the coat-tail and its contents had been torn from his hands, and, no doubt, carried off as a trophy by some on-looker.

The dreaded next morning came, and I presented myself at Arabella's house. When I followed the servant into the room where Arabella sat, she could not have looked more dismayed if to the

simple words 'Mr Brown,' the servant had added, 'with the cholera morbus.'

'Whatever have you been doing?' she asked; for the scratch all across one cheek, and the contusion on the left temple, told a tale of adventure.

I felt inclined to say: 'Please, ma'am, it was Jones,' as if I were a little boy before his school-mistress; but I resisted the inclination, and grinned feebly. I saw her eyes directed towards my empty hands, in one of which she had no doubt expected to see her bouquet triumphantly held.

'Where are my flowers?' she asked.

I shook my head sorrowfully.

'You have left them at home, I suppose?' she said.

Again I shook my head sorrowfully.

'And where is my prayer-book?' she asked coldly.

'In a tail-pocket of my over-coat,' I answered desperately.

'Why didn't you bring it?'

'I couldn't.'

'Why not? I thought it was in your coat-pocket.'

'So I believe it is.'

'Why didn't you look?'

'I haven't it.'

'You haven't your coat-pocket?'

'No; I will tell you all about it; and pray, be as merciful as you can.'

And without screening myself behind Jones, I gave an honest, straightforward account of my sad mishap. Arabella listened without interruption, but grew more and more like marble as I proceeded; and when I had finished, she rose from her chair, whilst indignation flashed from her eyes, and said contemptuously: 'So, after the language you used to me yesterday, you dared to take my bouquet and my prayer-book into such a place as that; and my name in the prayer-book too! Don't speak; I'll not hear a word: and never address me again as you did yesterday.—Good-morning, Mr Brown.' And she swept from the room with a distant courtesy. And she married the man who is popularly known as Another.

So the fatal bouquet cost one hat (a guinea), one over-coat (four guineas), a scratch on the face, a contusion on the left temple, a prayer-book (with Arabella's name in), and Arabella. I call it expensive.

A GLIMPSE AT A BRITISH CLASSIC.

THERE is nothing more true than that 'There is no accounting for tastes;' and it is as much in vain to decry the literary inclinations of our neighbours, as their politics or their creeds. Ladies and folks in the country like Mr Trollope's novels, which deal with a society with which they are acquainted, and yet of which they have not too much. Men and Londoners prefer Mr Thackeray with his stories of town and club life. Mr Dickens is common to both, yet has not a few detractors, who tell us that his pathos is 'sham,' and that he 'cannot draw a gentleman'—meaning by those expressions that they themselves do not care for pathos, and that their idea of a gentleman is a conventional one. Mr Wilkie Collins and Mr Lefanu are, in the eyes of some, 'unreal,' because they depict characters out of ordinary experience—a characteristic which in the eyes of others forms their

greatest attraction. Mr Lever is all in all to one section of the public, as Miss Young is to another.

It requires a catholic mind such as Leigh Hunt's to appreciate the beauties of all, but it is very easy to find fault with those writers with whom we have no sympathy. This is, of course, as true of the dead lions of literature as the living. But the former have this advantage over the latter, that the easy condemnation, 'They will not be heard of a generation or two hence,' cannot be passed on them. This is a stupid criticism at best, since there is nothing either to prove or controvert it; and, on the other hand, what is intended for praise in it may turn out to be blame; for the public taste may deteriorate (as some assert it has done in our time), and it may be more honourable for an author to be popular in his own generation than in that which succeeds it. At all events, it is only natural that a man should write for living readers, and not for an unborn race of whom he has no knowledge.

These remarks have been suggested to us, not only by the appearance of a Memoir of Jane Austen,* but by the public criticism which it has called forth. This latter has taken the form, which our modern review writers so often affect, not so much of notice of the author in hand, as of abuse of other authors of whom their taste does not happen to approve: and it evidently recommends itself to the said critics, in more than one instance, upon this most reasonable and excellent ground—that they do not happen to have read Miss Austen's works. As a matter of fact, there are not many people who have, although those who have done so are her warmest advocates. This is not said in her dispraise. If it were not for quotations, extracts in school-books, and occasional dramatic representations, the public at large perhaps would know very little of Shakspeare, whose works are more bought than read. When Miss Austen's works are bought, they are read, no doubt, but then they are very seldom bought. There is not such a thing as a cheap edition of them—that is, *really* cheap—in existence;† and considering she has been dead these fifty years, the fact is conclusive against her popularity. The 'goody-goody' people have done her mischief in this respect. 'How can you read all that sensational stuff' [that is, stories of plot and incident]! 'Why don't you take up with *Emma*, or *Pride and Prejudice*? Miss Austen is worth all your modern novelists put together.' This sort of rebuke annoys a stiff-backed generation, who like to consult their own tastes in literature, and not to be taught, with a birch rod, how to enjoy themselves. But the truth is that the 'goody-goody' people do not read *Emma* themselves. They think it wrong 'to waste their time over novels' of any sort, and they only recommend Miss Austen as a sort of alternative medicine, through which eventually the depraved literary stomach might be adapted for really wholesome food.

The genuine admirers of Miss Austen are a much higher class than they. We do not, however, agree with her biographer, that her works are 'especially acceptable to minds of the highest

order.' Her books recommend themselves to hard-worked intelligences as redolent of leisure and repose. She is as true to nature (in her limited acquaintance with it) as Shakspeare himself; and, in particular, she describes dull people to the life. Miss Mitford once said to her biographer: 'I would almost cut off one of my hands, if it would enable me to write like your aunt with the other;' but in fact she did write like her, and was probably aware of it. M. Guizot was enraptured with Miss Austen, as he was with Miss Ferrier, and is now with Miss Young. Sir John Mackintosh tried hard to persuade Madame de Staël to find interest in *Sense and Sensibility*, and failed, although that lady had certainly plenty of both. Dr Whewell delighted in *Persuasion*, and 'quite fired up' when somebody suggested it was 'rather dull.' Lord Macaulay had so high an opinion of Miss Austen's genius that he purposed to write a memoir of her for a new edition of her works, from the proceeds of which he intended to erect a monument to her memory. Walter Scott's admiration went further than all these. In his diary for March 14, 1826, occur these words: 'Read again, for the third time at least, Miss Austen's finely written novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any one going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!'

Scott was given to immoderate praise in his criticisms, as well as to modest depreciation of his own works; but even allowing for these characteristics, the above is high praise. Perhaps the very antagonism of her style to his own may have attracted him, though it did not so attract the authoress of *Jane Eyre*, who confessed she was unable to understand why people admired Miss Austen, 'among whose ladies and gentlemen, in their elegant but confined houses, she should hardly like to live.'

Quot homines, tot sententia. It is idle to impose our own tastes upon others. It is not every one to whom 'the involvements of ordinary life,' or 'commonplace things and characters,' can anyhow be made interesting: the more truly they are described, even, the duller they may appear. The opinions of one gentleman about *Emma*, we are told, 'were so bad that they could not be reported to the authoress.' He was doubtless a good deal bored. From this last incident—that our authoress was spared an unfavourable criticism—we may gather that her lines must have fallen among pleasant people; and so it was. If Jane Austen's life was barren of events, it was singularly smooth and peaceful. She was born in December 1775, at the parsonage-house of Steventon in Hampshire, and lived the life of a country clergyman's daughter almost all her days. One fancies, somehow, from her works, that she must have been 'an old maid,' and pictures her as everybody's maiden aunt, from the very first; whereas she was a particularly good-looking young woman, who died at the early age of forty-two. Still, she was always 'an old-fashioned sort of

* A Memoir of Jane Austen. By her nephew, J. E. Austen-Leigh. R. Bentley.

† Since this paper was written, a cheap edition of Miss Austen's work has appeared.

person,' and took to caps and the garb of middle age long before it is usual with the fair sex. She was not accomplished—in the present sense of the expression—nor well read; but then the literature of those days, which women with propriety could read, was limited. She knew more about Richardson, indeed, than it is likely any human being will know again. 'Every circumstance narrated in *Sir Charles Grandison*, all that was ever said or done in the cedar parlour, was familiar to her; and the wedding-days of Lady L. and Lady G. were as well remembered as if they had been living friends.' Next to Richardson, Johnson, and Crabbe, and Cowper were her favourite authors. Three out of these four writers are remarkable, it may be observed, for their minute and elaborate details, in which she was destined to surpass them all. Only three of Scott's novels were published in her lifetime; and it is curious, as her biographer remarks, how, living so entirely apart from the gossip of the literary world, she should have been so certain that they were Scott's.

'Walter Scott,' says she, in one of her pleasant, humorous letters, 'has no business to write novels: especially good ones. He has fame and profit enough as a poet, and ought not to be taking the bread out of other people's mouths. I do not intend to like *Waverley*, if I can help it; but I fear I must. I am quite determined, however, not to be pleased with Mrs —'s, should I ever meet with it, which I hope I may not. I think I can be stout against anything written by her. I have made up my mind to like no novels really, but Miss Edgeworth's, E's, and my own.'

There is a certain genuine obstinacy beneath this good-humoured fun. Her views of history and politics were conventional even for that day. Her genius was not imaginative; yet Aunt Jane was a great favourite with the children for her extemporaneous fairy stories, very long and circumstantial affairs, and continued from time to time. She had a lively fancy, which expressed itself after the fashion of those days, in epigrammatic verse. On reading in the newspapers the marriage of Mr Gell to Miss Gill of Eastbourne, she wrote:

At Eastbourne, Mr Gell, From being perfectly well,
Became dreadfully ill, For love of Miss Gill.
So he said, with some sighs, I'm the slave of your
iis;

Oh, restore, if you please, By accepting my *ees*.

And, again, on the marriage of a middle-aged flirt with a Mr Wake, she composed the following:

Maria, good-humoured, and handsome, and tall,
For a husband was at her last stake;
And having in vain danced at many a ball,
Is now happy to jump at a Wake.

Jane Austen was successful in everything which she attempted with her fingers. 'None of us,' writes her nephew and biographer, 'could throw spilkins in so perfect a circle, or take them off with so steady a hand. Her performance with cup and ball was marvellous.' She was known to catch the ball a hundred times, and till her fingers were weary. She wrote a beautiful hand. 'In those days there was an art in folding and sealing. No adhesive envelopes made all easy. Some people's letters always looked loose and untidy; but her paper was sure to take the right folds, and her sealing-wax to drop into the right

place. Her needlework, both plain and ornamented, was excellent, and she was considered especially great in satin stitch.'

These little traits appear to us as eminently characteristic of their possessor; and they are described by Mr Austen-Leigh with a simplicity and naturalness that remind us of his distinguished relative. Never, indeed, was biography written with less of pretence; its only fault is deficiency of material, and it was an unavoidable one. Not only was Jane Austen's life as devoid of incident and 'situation' as her works, but no interest appears to have been excited in her family by the circumstance of her having written 'works.' We learn that *Pride and Prejudice* was composed when she was twenty-one, and that the first title of it was *First Impressions; Sense and Sensibility* was commenced immediately afterwards; and *Northanger Abbey* followed that with equal rapidity. The three books were written, in fact, within two years (1796—1798)—which is quite a 'sensational' rate of speed. But beyond this we learn nothing.

In 1801, the Austen family removed to Bath; and four years later, to Southampton. Here there was a strange sight to be seen in the shape of a Marchioness of Lansdowne driving out in a light phaeton, drawn by six, and sometimes by eight, little ponies, each pair decreasing in size, and becoming lighter in colour, as it was placed farther away from the carriage. The two nearest pairs were driven, the two leading ones were ridden by boyish postilions. This fairy equipage, we are told, was Aunt Jane's delight. From Southampton, in 1809, she removed to Chawton House, in Hampshire, 'which must be considered the place most closely connected with her career as a writer; since it was here that, in the maturity of her mind, she either wrote, or rearranged and prepared for publication, the books by which she has become known to the world.' By this it will be gathered that our authoress was as yet unpublished. She must have kept her books, involuntarily, for nearly twice the time recommended by the Latin poet. It is evident she could not find a publisher willing to bring them out; so young and rapid a writer would never have allowed thirteen years to pass away without putting pen to paper, unless she had suffered great discouragements. Her first attempts at publication were, in fact, most disheartening. In November 1797, her father wrote the following letter to Mr Cadell:

SIR—I have in my possession a manuscript novel, comprising three volumes, about the length of Miss Burney's *Evelina*. As I am well aware of what consequence it is that a work of this sort should make its first appearance under a respectable name, I apply to you. I shall be much obliged to you, therefore, if you will inform me whether you choose to be concerned in it, what will be the expense of publishing it at the author's risk, and what you will venture to advance for the property of it, if on perusal it is approved of. Should you give any encouragement, I will send the work.—Your humble servant,

GEORGE AUSTEN.

The publisher shewed an unusual courtesy; he wrote back by return of post to decline all these offers. And thus was the great British classic *Pride and Prejudice* condemned to eleven years' seclusion. The fate of *Northanger Abbey* was still more sad. It was sold in 1803 to a publisher at

Bath for ten pounds, but he thought so ill of his bargain, that he resolved to put up with his first loss rather than risk the publication of the novel. It lay for years unnoticed and forgotten. But when four novels of steadily increasing, though moderate, success had given the writer some confidence in herself, she wished to recover the copy-right of this early book. Her brother Henry undertook the negotiation, and until it was concluded, sagaciously omitted to remark that *Northanger Abbey* was by the authoress of *Pride and Prejudice*.

Mr Austen-Leigh is of opinion that his aunt was not much mortified by these early failures. We do not agree with him. It is not in the nature of an author, and far less of a female author, not to have been so; and we feel confident that it was the apathy of 'the Row' which created a corresponding feeling in the unappreciated young novelist. It was 1811 before Jane Austen sat down at her 'little mahogany desk' again, to scribble off *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*, almost as quickly as she had completed her first three novels. 'How she was able to effect all this is surprising, for she had no separate study to retire to, and most of the work must have been done in the general sitting-room, subject to all kinds of casual interruptions.'

We have no doubt that a chance of publication was the spur that actuated her; but, unfortunately, there is no record of its occurrence. For her first book (*Sense and Sensibility*), she received one hundred and fifty pounds, which seems pretty fair payment; on the other hand, her commercial value did not rise with her success, or perhaps her success has been exaggerated; the profits of all the four novels which were printed before her death only yielded her seven hundred pounds. If she lacked the 'pudding,' however, she received plenty of praise, from His Royal Highness the Prince Regent (who, she was assured, had a copy of her works at each of his residences), down (or up) to Archbishop Whately, who reviewed her in the *Quarterly* most favourably. All this never turned her head; she seems to have been the same simple, unselfish, homely creature from first to last. She knew none of the great and famous people who talked and wrote so much about her; she lived amongst her country folks, from whom she drew her portraits, or rather, as her biographer remarks, her photographs, since no ideal expression is introduced, no feature softened. Her representations of the clergy are not, to our eyes, flattering specimens of their class; 'and yet,' says her nephew, 'she was the daughter and the sister of clergymen who were certainly not low examples of their order; she has chosen three of her heroes from that profession, but no one in these days can think that Edmund Bertram (for example) had adequate ideas of the duties of a parish minister. Such, however, were the opinions and the practice then prevalent among respectable and conscientious clergymen, before their minds had been stirred, first by the Evangelical, and afterwards by the High Church movement which this country has witnessed.' If they were not remarkable works of genius in other respects, Jane Austen's novels would be of value as faithful mirrors of a generation that has passed away. It is not, however, to be supposed that she stooped to personality or caricature. 'Her own relations never recognised any individual in her characters; and I can call

to mind several of her acquaintance whose peculiarities were very tempting, of whom there are no traces in her pages.'

Her favourite among her own *dramatis personæ* was *Emma*. 'She would, if asked, tell us many little particulars about the subsequent career of her people. In this traditionary way we learned that Miss Steele never succeeded in catching the doctor; that Kitty Bennet was satisfactorily married to a clergyman near Pemberley, while Mary obtained nothing higher than one of her Uncle Philip's clerks, and was content to be considered a star in local society; that "the considerable sum" given by Mrs Norris to William Price was one pound; and that the letters placed by Frank Churchill before Jane Fairfax, which she swept away unread, contained the word "Pardon."'

To how many of our present readers will these communications have any significance? 'A few years ago, a gentleman visiting Winchester Cathedral, desired to be shewn Miss Austen's grave. The verger, as he pointed it out, asked: "Pray, sir, can you tell me whether there was anything remarkable about that lady; so many people want to know where she was buried?" During her life, the ignorance of the verger was shared by most people. Few knew that there was anything remarkable about that lady.' She had no wish that it should be otherwise; no craving for applause; no desire for fame. When the end at last came, and she was asked by her attendants if there was anything she wanted, her reply was: '*Nothing but death.*'

S H E T L A N D.

ADIEU! the cliffs that front the wave,
Rolled from the icebergs' sullen home;
Adieu! the rapid firths that rave,
The rugged skerries, plumed with foam.
Adieu! the gloom, the grandeur hoar,
The majesty of surge and storm;
My heart shall keep for evermore,
Wild shore, thy wonder and thy charm.

No woodland wreathes thy brows austere;
No teeming levels wave with corn;
No voice of song salutes the ear
From leafy perch at eve or morn.
Yet thine the might of mountain steep,
And purple robes on mountain sides,
And thine the strain that never sleeps,
The thunder of Atlantic tides.

Nor yet of joyous life bereft,
Thy waters roll, thy mountains soar,
For myriad wings from crag and cleft
Swarm forth to whiten sea and shore:
In endless rings the sea-mew flits;
The gannet like an arrow falls;
And swart and grim the cormorant sits
On jagged reefs and rocky walls.

Stern in the storm, that hurls on thee
The cataract billows' headlong snows,
Thy rocky ramparts to the sea
Their everlasting strength oppose.
But when thy wave unrippled drinks
The splendour of a setting sun,
How glorious are thy craggy brinks,
Thine islets green, and mountains dun!